



150 organizations worldwide demand that the island of La Graciosa break its agreement with Philip Morris

The in a letter to the President of the Government tobacco control community denounces Spain's violation of international laws that prevent the interference of tobacco companies in public affairs

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150 national and international organizations, led by the Spanish National Committee for the Prevention of Smoking (CNPT), Nofumadores.org and ASH (Action on Smoking and Health) denounce the illegal agreement between the City Council of Teguise, administrator of La Graciosa Island, and Philip Morris, using a biological reserve of world interest to whitewash the image and advance the interests of a tobacco company. The project promoted by the mayor of Teguise, Oswaldo Betancort, does not comply with article 5.3 of the FCTC (Framework Convention on Tobacco Control), of the WHO, ratified by Spain and that, which prohibits the participation or sponsorship of the tobacco when setting health policies by public bodies.

The agreement signed between the city council of Teguise and Philip Morris suggests that La Graciosa will become a 100% smoke-free island. The reality of this illegal agreement is that an island of high ecological and scenic value becomes a platform to continue normalizing smoking and promote IQOS, the heated tobacco product from the tobacco company. The agreement does not eliminate the places where to smoke on the island and continues to allow electronic cigarettes and heated tobacco, expressly referring to the fact that areas must be designated to smoke either of the tobacco products. Philip Morris, also, does not mention that the Company is the main responsible for the pollution by cigarette butts on our coasts and worldwide. Raquel Fernández Megina, president of Nofumadores.org, affirmed that "this agreement must be rejected by the Teguise City Council, by the Ministry of Health and by the President of the Government immediately. It is a farce that seeks to whitewash a company that causes cancer, pollutes and is the main responsible for the legislative backwardness in Spain in the fight against smoking".

The action of the Teguise City Council is raising concerns worldwide among medical, anti-smoking and civil rights organizations, which sign and support the [letter](#) sent by the Spanish National Committee for the Prevention of Smoking (CNPT), Nofumadores.org and ASH to the President of the Spanish Government, Pedro Sánchez, to request compliance with the international agreements signed by Spain and which are to prevent the interference of tobacco companies such as Philip Morris in health policies. "In itself, the agreement is a joke," said Francisco Rodríguez Lozano, president of the ENSP, European Network for Smoking Prevention "there is nothing that the mayor of Teguise cannot achieve simply by applying Spanish anti-tobacco legislation. What's more, the Spanish tobacco Act allows the Teguise - La Graciosa Government to go further without engaging in the advertising of heated tobacco". In fact, the Tobacco Control community in Spain maintains an offer to the Teguise City Council to reorient the "La Graciosa sin humo (Smoke-Free La Graciosa)" campaign from a Public Health and environmental point of view and without the collaboration of PMI.

Council members from major Spanish political parties such as Partido Popular, Partido Socialista Obrero Español and Podemos voted against

The council's own parliamentary groups, with the exception of Coalición Canaria, regretted voting in May in favor of the initiative that put La Graciosa in the hands of Philip Morris. After having initially voted in favor of the project, "La Graciosa sin humo", which was proposed through the council of citizen participation of Tegui, they received the unanimous rejection of the medical organizations of the Canary Islands and decided to vote in full for repeal the illegal agreement with the tobacco company. The initiative achieved what seemed impossible, that PP, PSOE and Podemos voted to annul the agreement, however, it was maintained by a majority of a single vote, since the Canarian Coalition formation governs in majority in the consistory. Mayor Oswaldo Betancort remained impassive in the face of the requests that now come from all over the world to reverse an agreement "that puts the wolf to take care of the sheep", as stated by the president of Nofumadores.org, allowing Philip Morris to control the narrative of the fight against smoking while boycotting smoke-free spaces in Spain through Hostelería de España whose membership includes many tobacco groups.

A certification that has serious suspicions

The tobacco company undertook, in its agreement with the Tegui City Council, to cover the expenses to implement the actions aimed at obtaining the TÜV Austria "Smoke-Free Culture" certification, in addition to covering fee of the certification.

Andrés Zamorano, president of the CNPT, denounces that "the" Smoke-Free Culture "certification protocol of TÜV Austria seems to have been made by the tobacco industry itself to continue maintaining its economic interests.

The actions established by the certification are aligned with the strategy and slogans that the tobacco industry has been promoting for decades: "improve relations between smokers and non-smokers", "more harmonious environment and mutual respect", in addition to help to PMI to promote and market its heated tobacco product.

On the other side, it's perfectly clear for the Spanish Ministry of Health that the company that issues the certification, at the service of PM, fails to comply with its own parameters, since TÜV Austria affirms that to grant it they must "meet or exceed" the guidelines of the National Health Authorities. Both Spanish laws and the official position of the Ministry of Health, oppose the attempted penetration of heated tobacco by Philip Morris, which is legally equated in all aspects with burned tobacco.

For all these reasons, the associations promoting the letter, which have also informed to all the competent international organizations of the facts, call on the City Council to continue its work towards a tobacco free future, but demand that the City Council terminate its agreement with PMI and stop using the TÜV Austria certification "Smoke-Free Culture" as both only serve the economic interests of the tobacco industry.

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